

High Ideals

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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PICS MANUAL

WINTER, 1957
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LENT—the deepest spiritual season of the Church year.

Do we hold it as such? Lent is the time for us to think more seriously of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Saviour. God not only made the supreme sacrifice of sending His Son to earth in the form of a human being, but also He gave His Son to suffer and die on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. How great is His sacrifice.

What about us? I admit that none of us can make as great a sacrifice as He. But do we even try to make a *small sacrifice*?

Most people say that they are giving up something for Lent. What are they giving up? Material things such as candy, cokes, movies, etc. Is this a sacrifice or policy of self-discipline? To give up something of material value is fine. But it is not enough. To give our hearts and souls to him is an act of true preparation. Use your precious time this Lenten Season in learning more about Him.

Only by taking up the cross and giving of ourselves will we be prepared to receive the true joy and meaning of that glorious Easter Day.

Should Easter be the end of such giving and sacrificing? *No!* It should be only the beginning of a life that is seeking to become more like that of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Jack Trautwein
Zion Lutheran
Baltimore, Md.

High Ideals

January, February, March, 1958

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**JAN.
1**



Presentation Pointers

Use the object method of presentation. Provide some type of cabinet or shelves. Stock this cabinet with objects (cans, boxes, etc.) marked "Bible Study," "Prayer," "Worship," etc.

Divide the topic among three persons. As each presents his part, he should take the item off the shelf and hold it in his hand. It would be well to learn these parts rather than read them.

Perhaps you will want to mimeograph a list of these items to hand out to each person before he leaves the meeting. He could use this as a personal check list and evaluation sheet. He could mark the things that he does well in and the things in which he needs to improve.

NEW YEAR'S INVENTORY

by Arthur Bauer

IN THE business world it is of utmost importance for a proprietor to prepare for future business. He must take inventory of the stock he has on hand. Then he must add the items that are needed to carry on his business.

In the same way we must prepare for the greatest living of all—the business of living. The shelves must be full of the things that count or business will fail.

1. *Spiritual Resources*

The term "spiritual resources" refers to intangible nouns which give us poise, strength, and power to live a Christian life. Several such sources are listed below. What others can be added?

Bible study. Each generation must face the same problems over and over again—sickness, death, etc. God has given some guidance to us in meetings these problems through the Bible. The Book becomes a sign post on life's journey, pointing out the way men must seek. From this Book we find and develop the chief relationship in stocking up spiritual power. We accept Christ as our Lord and Master. The Bible brings us the story of God and His revelations to men. What a source of spiritual power.

Prayer. The human soul is seeking a companion. It gropes for peace of mind and heart. It longs for a hand outstretched in benediction. Only in Christian prayer can the soul find its rest. "Come unto me," said Jesus, "and I shall give you rest."

Worship. Power comes from a confirmation of belief through a communal worship. We gain many things at the Common Service. There is something special in witnessing the joyful faith of brother-Christians.

Christian Service. Blessings come to us as well as to others through service in His name. Here is the joy of the ministry. Here is the power behind the diaconate. Here is the spiritual resource which carries missionaries away from home and friends to those needing Christ across the sea.

Doctrinal Study. Understanding and comprehending God's message for all

mankind will give poise to anyone. Intellectual confidence is an all important source of spiritual power.

The Sacraments. The Presence of the Living Word in and through the water and bread and wine has proved an inspiration and encouragement to Christians for nineteen hundred years.

2. Christian Attitudes

What are attitudes? They are ways of thinking which lead to feeling and action. What are Christian attitudes? Such attitudes directed and controlled by an awareness of God and Christ in our lives. How do we develop such attitudes? Here are some answers.

Reflection. This word comes from two Latin words meaning "bend back." We think, ponder, deliberate, muse, contemplate, consider, meditate, or study. This is the modern concept of accepting only after thorough investigation. We ought to reflect upon the Bible and its meaning for the 20th century. We ought to reflect upon the life and teaching of Jesus. Lives and concepts are changed by thinking upon Christ.

Intellectual powers. It is not the amount of material you read as what material you read. America's greatest selling literature seems to be the funny books. The newspapers, we are told by experts, are written for the interests and mental abilities of sixth graders. The movies, in many cases, are obviously an insult to the God-given intelligence of people. Mentally, many people are in a rut and doing nothing to get out of it. They are excited over the international situation of which they really know nothing. Brain power is a necessity for cultivating attitudes.

Responsibility. A Christian is concerned for his fellowmen. He is conscious of his responsibilities. Here is a fine method for developing Christian attitudes: Accept responsibility!

Know the Church. Christ has committed to the Church the work of carrying His message to the world. Through a thorough study of the Church, its or-

ganization, methods, and opportunities you can nurture Christian attitudes.

Know Church History. Knowing the what and why of the past will give a broader outlook upon situations as they exist today. In cultivating Christian attitudes today it will aid to know what the Church did years ago.

3. Christian Personality

Christian Fellowship. "The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." Nothing helps a Christian personality like the company of another Christian personality. With a similar devotion to their Lord, fellow Christians build character in each other. Luther League will help personality to grow as Christian comes into contact with Christian.

Friendship. The only way to make and keep friends is to give of yourself. It takes time and Christian love to have a friend who is more than an acquaintance. The give and take of friendship will make a strong character.

Home Ties. One sure method for developing Christian personality is to retain close home ties. The affection of mother and father for their children, children for their parents, and brothers and sisters for each other, is an enriching bond giving strength and poise and personality.

Loss of Self. "He that loses His life for my sake shall find it." This promise of Jesus has been re-emphasized by modern psychologists. In giving up yourself you will find real self-fulfillment. Character demands sacrifice. Personality demands losing yourself.

Biographies. The study of the lives of Christian men and women will yield the same results as friendships. The great individuals of history are yours for close and intimate companionship. They will help you develop your personality in a Christian way.

Joy and Humor. A Christian has been called the happiest person alive. What does the phrase, "Joy in the Lord mean"? Why should a Christian be happier than others?

Luther
League
Emblem
on the
Berbice
River



The

Coat

of

Arms

Presentation Pointers

Here is a play about the Luther emblem. Reduce or add to the number of characters to meet the size of your group.

Characters in the play are five young people (four fellows and a girl) in modern dress; Luther's Voice (offstage); Luther; four students; three monks; Philip Melancthon; John Tetzl; and children to pantomime a short scene. Costumes should be used, but are not necessary.

Use musical interludes to move from one scene to the next. Darken the stage or use a curtain. The person playing the part of Martin Luther on stage could record the offstage voice on tape. This could be played at spots where Luther speaks offstage. The effect of the same voice coming from two places will be good.

Before the play starts, sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." As the last phrase of the final stanza is sung, lower the lights and open the curtain.

Luther emblem decals can be purchased for 5c from LLA. Emblem jewelry and seals must be purchased through the publication house, 1228 Spruce Street, Philadelphia 7, Penna.

by John W. Roberts, Jr.

Luther League Emblem

(Spotlight is on four foot diameter model of the Luther emblem. Offstage conversation of 5 boys and girls in modern dress)

BILL: Say June, what's that button your wearing in your lapel?

LUKE: Yes, I've been wondering about that too.

BUD AND CLIFF: We, too.

JUNE: Do you mean to tell me that you've all been confirmed in a Lutheran church and don't know what this emblem is?

CLIFF: What's being a Lutheran got to do with it?

JUNE: Well, its *only* the emblem of our Lutheran Church and the personal Coat of Arms of Martin Luther!

CLIFF: Well, that's certainly news to me!

LUKE: Tell me, do all the parts of it have a meaning?

JUNE: Certainly, every single part has a meaning. Let's look at it more closely *(They walk on stage)* and see what the parts are. *(stage lights go on)*

BILL: *(pointing to cross)* Well, right here in the center is a black cross.

LUKE: And here's a red heart, I wonder what that means?

BUD: This almost looks like a five leaf clover, if there is such a thing.

JUNE: A five leaf clover! That's a white rose.

CLIFF: Oh you can't fool me on this one, this represents the sky.

LUKE: All that's left now is the gold ring.

BUD: And you mean to say that these five things—the cross, the heart, the white rose, the blue sky, and the gold ring—each mean something different?

JUNE: Well, our Pastor says these are the five things the Church had lost between the time of St. Paul and Martin Luther and which were found again in the Reformation, and which our Church has built its faith upon.

(Lights out—people off stage. Music. Set stage with four students sitting around table talking.)

LUTHER VOICE: After the Protestant Reformation had reached its turning point I, Dr. Martin Luther and my wife, Katherine, lived in an abandoned monastery and frequently had a number of students as boarders. I loved nothing better than to sit around the dinner table with the students and talk with them concerning my beliefs. Let me give you a picture of some of the moments that we spent together and of some of the questions the students asked.

(Spotlight to be shown on each part as it is mentioned)

STUDENT 1: Dr. Luther, we'd like to know what your Coat of Arms means.

LUTHER: Now that we've studied together, can't you guess what each part means?

STUDENT 2: *(eagerly)* I know what the cross stands for! Jesus Christ, crucified.

STUDENT 3: Yes, and it's meant to remind us how we have left it out of our

lives for so long.

STUDENT 4: I know that a heart always stands for love. This must be to remind us of the love Christ has for us.

LUTHER: Fine, fine, and the white rose stands for pure living—the blue sky for service, and the gold ring for eternity. But now let me tell you how I came to include each of these in my Coat of Arms.

(*Curtain. Music.*)

LUTHER VOICE: I had done a lot of thinking about the wrongs of my Church. Mostly after I had done a great deal of Bible reading. It may seem strange to you of this generation that I, a man in the Church, did not know very much about the Bible until late in life. But in my day, nobody was supposed to know about the Bible. I only came to read it when I was assigned to *teach* Bible in the University. In that reading I discovered many things about faith I had not know, about a God I had not known, and about a Church I had not known. All of these things were different from what the Church taught. I wrote my 95 *Theses* which was a listing of the things I believed. Since there were no newspapers in our day I nailed them to the door of the Church for everyone to read. I had just returned from this task and was praying in my cell when some of my brothers burst in upon me.

(*Stage is set to emulate monastery cell, pallet on floor, small table with large Bible on it, Luther in monks habit with cowl, kneeling in prayer—three monks rush into room.*)

MONK 1: Brother Martin what have you been doing? Everyone is talking about Martin Luther, Martin Luther!!!

MONK 2: What is it all about?

MONK 3: Some even say you are trying to destroy the Church!!

MONK 1: They can't mean that—it *can't* be true!!!

LUTHER: All I have said is that I think that the cross has been taken out of the Church.

ALL MONKS: (*shouting*) Taken out!!!?

MONK 1: Why, we have the cross on the Altar—

MONK 2: Another on the steeple of the Church—

MONK 3: We make the sign of the cross—

MONK 2: How can you say the cross is missing?

LUTHER (*Goes to table on which is a scale. Holding cross in one hand and church in the other he asks*) Which should be more important, the cross or the Church?

MONK 1: Why, the cross, of course.

LUTHER: That is just what I have *said*. But for hundreds of years the Church has been more important than the cross. Now the cross which stands for Christ must be the very *center* of our religion.

(*Lights off*)

LUTHER VOICE: It was my study of the Bible, which few in my day had an opportunity to do, that showed me that the Church was leading us away from the real meaning of the cross and telling us to do things which were not according to the wish of Jesus. For that reason when I made up my Coat of Arms I insisted that the black cross be at the very center, so that it could never again be forgotten.

(*Lights out. Music. Luther and three monks seated on benches in monastery.*)

LUTHER VOICE: I decided to include the red heart, which speaks of the love Christ has for us and the love we should have for Him, after a number of us had returned from the great city of Rome. As we returned, a strange discovery came to

us that there was really no love for Christ in His Church.

LUTHER: Did you have the feeling, Brothers, when we were in Rome that there was no real love for Christ in that city?

MONK 1: (*furtively*) I felt rather that there was hatred of Christ.

MONK 2: Yes, and no respect for him. It certainly was a wicked city. Even the leaders are wicked.

MONK 3: Or could it mean that the people are afraid of Him instead of loving Him?

LUTHER: I think you have the answer right there. Fear has taken the place of love in the Church.

MONK 1: As I look back to my childhood, I can remember being taught nothing but to be afraid of Christ.

MONK 2: Yes, I remember a picture of Christ in which he was a horrible judge with a sword sticking out of one ear and a lily sticking out of the other.

MONK 3: Yes, I remember that — I too have always been afraid.

LUTHER: (*vehemently*) That is not the way it is supposed to be! The Bible shows us that Christ loves us and we should love Him.

LUTHER VOICE: That tells you a little about why I included the heart as the second part of my Coat of arms—to remind all Christians that Christ first loved us, that we need not fear Him, and that we must love Him because He is Love.

(*Music. Lights down. Curtain. Reset for a split stage.*)

(*Scene: Right side of stage: Luther and Melancthon are sitting in a garden near a trellis painted white. A white rose is growing on the trellis but it is not obvious.*)

LUTHER VOICE: The way in which the white rose came to have such a vital meaning to me is a very interesting story. Philip Melancthon, who accepted my ideas about the Church, and I were seated in the garden at his home. We talked, we dreamed, we read. Perhaps you can envision us as we sat in the garden, a beautiful trellis behind us. I, in looking around was admiring this trellis, how brightly painted, how well made . . .

LUTHER: Philip, look!

PHILIP: What is it, Martin?

LUTHER: Here's something I hadn't seen before.

PHILIP: Oh, that little white rose growing on the trellis? What did you think the trellis was for if not to bear roses?

LUTHER: That's just what I mean, Philip. Of course the trellis is for roses. But the trellis is so beautiful that for all the hours I've been sitting here with you I never saw the rose until now.

PHILIP: Very well. But what is that to get so excited about?

LUTHER: Can't you see how like the Church of our day (*removes rose, holds in hand,*) is this trellis? So beautiful in itself that it hides that which is most important—the pure life of the Christian.

PHILIP: I see what you mean. We build great cathedrals, we dress in much finery, we teach the need for many observances. But at the same time we forget this idea of a pure life.

(*As Luther begins next speech, John Tetzel and fellow indulgence sellers pantomime entering the market place on the left front stage, Tetzel men carry chest to receive money and have papers to be sold as indulgences. Children walk by in pantomime as Tetzel waves arms selling indulgences.*)

LUTHER: That's just it! Our people have become so used to the idea of buying freedom from their sins that they don't try to lead a good life any more.

PHILIP: Yes, I have seen even children rushing to the market place to buy indulgences—those worthless pieces of paper which the church tells us will get us into heaven.

(Action continues onstage for short time—Luther holding up rose and studying it.)

LUTHER VOICE: And so it was the white rose came to my attention. It was included in my Coat of Arms to warn all Christians that a pure life can not be forgotten, nor can it be replaced with anything else.

(Just before curtain closes action ends, stage lights out, and spot focus is on rose. Music. Curtain. Scene returns to Luther's home with three students around candlelit table.)

LUTHER VOICE: One of the ideas taught and emphasized by the Church of my day was portrayed in a picture that every child of my generation knew. It was a picture of monks in a ship going to heaven, and none but men of the Church were in that boat. It was this picture that made the monastery so attractive to me. But I soon found the real joy of life as taught by our Saviour. The blue sky in our Coat of Arms stands for what I learned and tried to teach others.

STUDENT 1: Dr. Luther, you said the blue sky stands for service. What do you mean by service?

STUDENT 3: Yes. Could you not have served far better in the monastery?

LUTHER: I found, my friends, that while I was in the monastery I was not serving God. I was not serving man. I was serving only myself.

STUDENT 3: And it was the Bible that told you this?

LUTHER: Yes, the Bible showed me the blue sky of Jesus Christ—a sky which covers the whole world.

STUDENT 1: I see what you mean. There was much more blue sky than came through the window of a monastery cell.

LUTHER VOICE: That did express quite clearly the meaning of the blue sky—a vision of service for God and for all men. There was one question more left in the minds of the students.

STUDENT 2: Dr. Luther, some have said that this golden ring is only for decoration.

STUDENT 1: Yes, and others say that it's a wall built around Lutherans to keep others out.

STUDENT 2: But if I know you, Doctor, there is a real meaning to that circle that encloses our emblem.

LUTHER: A line without beginning and without ending is a symbol of what?

STUDENT 3: Oh! Eternity of course!!

LUTHER: Yes, the blessing of eternal life to be shared with all men, this is the Golden ring in our Lutheran Coat of Arms.

(Soft music plays as Luther Voice offstage speaks.)

LUTHER VOICE: This is our heritage, climaxed by the symbol of Eternity, showing forth a challenge to world wide service. This is the hope, this is the task of the Lutheran Church. The white rose, symbol of purity, establishes beyond all shadow of doubt that each person speaks for himself before God according to the life he has lived. The red heart tells us of the Love of God and our need to love God and man because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon a black cross. This is the center of our Faith.

(Organ swells as it plays "A Mighty Fortress is Our God.")



LET THERE BE LIGHT

by Diane Pschorr

This topic was written for Intermediate Day devotions, at the Ministerium of Penna. convention, July 13, 1957.

IN the short time that Jesus was on earth He performed many miracles—healing the sick, making lame men walk, and blind men see. Men, however, could not believe that this Jesus was God's Son. Some who did believe had their minds poisoned by others. There were many persons who did not wish Him to remain alive.

(Discussion: Do you know of any modern instances where people are having their minds poisoned against Jesus? Against the work of those who serve Jesus? Where? How can we get the truth to these people?)

(Sing "Come Thou, Almighty King," 54 Christian Youth Hymnal, first stanza.)

The purpose of our Lord's coming into the world was to draw people nearer to their Father. Many people could not understand this fact. Jesus, however, took all their criticisms. He went on teaching

and performing miracles. He continued to tell the people of God's love for them.

Today we should pray for strength to pass on our faith to others who have not yet realized what Christ can mean to them. (*Picture yourself as a Christian facing the lions in the arena. What would your thoughts be?*)

Missionaries help in spreading the good news of the Gospel to all corners of the world. We should pray for them and help them as much as we can.

(*Discussion: What has your league done in the past to encourage missionaries? To aid in their work? What can you do in the future? What is the present overseas mission study program of the YLLA? Japan. What was the 1956-57 theme? Malaya*)

What about us here at home? What are we doing to share the faith we have received? Are we faithful witnesses for our Christ?

(*Discuss: What opportunities are there around your home and town to share your faith? Discuss methods, if time permits. Name and discuss the work of two agencies of our church which aid people in foreign countries in time of need. Lutheran World Action and Lutheran World Relief. How can you, as a Luther League, support these agencies?*)

(*Sing "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," 30 CYH, entire hymn.*)

The thing which might impress you most about Jesus is His death on the cross. Jesus did not have to die in such a cruel manner. He did not have to bear such pain. But He did. Even more amazing was the great love He showed as He hung there.

You will remember how he asked God to forgive His murderers for "they know not what they do." He did not hold a grudge against men. Instead He set an example of forgiveness and love. We should try to follow Christ's example.

For instance, if a person has done something wrong you should help him

rather than condemn him. Do not shun him. This will make him lose faith in himself. By shunning him you probably succeed only in causing further damage. Instead, help this person in every way to forget the past and to build a strong, secure future.

People should be able to live together. Christians can live together. But as long as there is jealousy and pride there is sin. And when there is sin there is open strife. You may wake up tomorrow to find another war raging. It may be your boy friend, father, or brother who has been called to serve his country. This is not security.

Jesus died that we might live. He died that we might live together. Don't you think it should be possible? With faith in God it is possible. "It is God who hath made us, and not we ourselves."

(*Discuss some ways in which you could strengthen your own faith.*)

You and I hold the key. But we must do more than hold it; we must turn it. We must examine ourselves and find our short comings. We must strive to right the wrongs we have done to others. Then only, dare we turn to God and ask for peace. May God give us light to find the Way!

(*Sing "Lead Kindly Light," 221 CYH.*)

"Let there be light!" Let us spread the joy and peace which comes from faith in the Saviour, that joy and enlightenment may enter every heart. Let us go into all the world and spread the light of the Gospel to every creature.

(*Read Matthew 5:14-16.*)

Devotions

Hymn 51 CYH, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"

Lords Prayer

Scripture, John 1:1-12

Hymn 226 CYH, "In Glad Obedience"

Prayer No. 17, page 364 CYH

Topic

Hymn 126 CYH, "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night"

Benediction



Blind Children
Colony of Mercy

J A P A N

Presentation Pointers

Decorate your meeting room in an Oriental atmosphere. But don't let the decorations take all your time, effort, and talent. Put plenty of time, effort, and talent into your topic presentation.

Set up a display of various items from Japan. Many items can be borrowed from servicemen. If there are Japanese exchange students in any nearby colleges invite them to your meeting as guests.

Present the first three sections and latter sections by yourself or let a different person present each section. Then use variety for the center part of the topic material—the section dealing with actual work in Japan.

Have a turnover chart of each type of work. Or have your league artist illustrate the various kinds of work. Play a game in your presentation of types of work. List on the blackboard the work in Japan. Then act out scenes from each site. Let the leaguers guess which one you're doing.

For a project, why not find yourself a Japanese pen pal? Or remember Japanese missionaries with letters and Easter cards.

Fliers and additional material can be obtained through the ULCW and the LLA, 122 Spruce St., Philadelphia 7; or the Board of Foreign Missions, 231 Madison Ave., New York 16.

J-3's Become Oriental

TWO young men are going as J-3's. J is for Japan and 3 stands for three years. This means that they have just finished their college education in the States and are going to teach conversational English at Kyushu Gakuin, Kumamoto, for a period of three years.

One J-3 has just completed his years of service and is on his way home for a furlough. But he will return to Japan as an ordained missionary.

What makes these young people choose Japan as their place of service? Let's look more closely at this land of Oriental enchantment.

Nature has showered this nation with breathtaking beauty, fashioned it into one of the most beautiful countries in the world. There is an exotic loveliness about its mountains, the never-ending shoreline, the tall pine trees, ethpicturesque valleys with rice paddies, and the delicate cherry blossoms transforming the landscape into a fairyland.

Enchanting - Exciting

Japan is about the size of California. Because of its mountains, only one-eighth of the land can be cultivated. On this limited land area live 85,000,000 people. Farming and fishing are principal occupations and rice is the staple crop.

Chopsticks and delicate china bowls neatly arranged on a lacquered table are a distinctive part of Japanese life. At meal time the family sits on the floor around a very low table and eats with chopsticks. Outside the home, however, life takes on a western look.

Not only is Japan enchanting. It is exciting, as well. The beauty is old—the excitement new. Traditions are fading and new ideas are coming to the fore. Young people are looking forward to a new and different kind of life.

A Golden Opportunity

Before World War II the Japanese government recognized three forms of religion: Shintoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. The oldest indigenous religion is Shinto, "the way of the gods." Buddhism

came from Korea about 550 A.D. Christian missionary work, begun by Jesuits in 1549, was stopped in 1606, and all communication with the outside world was cut off. In 1854 Japan was opened again to the Western world. Missionaries entered and soon spread to all important centers of the land.

The old religions of pre-war Japan lost their hold on the people who defeat came in 1945. Faith in the divinity of Japan's ruler was shattered when the Emperor declared he was not a god. Many Buddhist temples, bombed during the war, were neglected, and temple lands were sold, causing financial distress to the priests.

Then the Christian religion became a subject of earnest inquiry to the people. They sought a faith that would guide them out of chaos. From devastation of home and soul, they reached out for a new way of life. *Christianity has its golden opportunity in Japan today.*

But in a land where there is much unemployment, hunger, and need, Communism offers a bright promise. It is Communism that threatens Christianity today, more so than the old religions of the past.

Proclaiming the Gospel

In proclaiming the Gospel to a people so highly literate as the Japanese, the Church has utilized new methods and approaches.

THE BOOKMOBILE

"How would you like to take a ride in the Bookmobile this evening?" asks the young missionary who with his Bookmobile is a familiar sight in many of the rural villages.

The Bookmobile is a large truck filled with sleeping quarters and kitchen facilities for the two men who operate it. The back of the truck opens up as a platform with an organ and reading desk. A public address system and facilities for showing films are within. There are shelves of books for the people to read.

As the Bookmobile passes through the village, the loud speaker announces that the service will be held on a nearby vacant lot. When the Bookmobile pulls up to the site, the streets already are crowded

with hundreds of children and young people, and a fair sprinkling of adults. Among the crowd are passet sheets of paper with several hymns printed in Japanese. After the singing of a hymn, a film is shown. Then a story is told for children—a story which the storyteller illustrates with cardboard pictures.

CHURCH SERVICE

Before entering the church we must remove our shoes and place them on the racks in the vestibule. From the row of slippers at the portal you slide your feet into a pair, much too small, and shuffle into the church to take your place in one of the pews. The pastor enters the chancel and begins the service, using the liturgy of the Common Service. The language is different but the responses and hymns are strangely familiar. Suddenly you realize that the Christian faith is not only yours. It is a world faith and here are people ten thousand miles from your home town giving expression to that same faith.

LUTHERAN HOURS

Here are the offices of the Lutheran Hour, a radio program which has been broadcast every Sunday since October 28, 1951. Most of the Lutheran groups in Japan contribute to this important radio ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The director says, "During the year more than 20,000 Japanese have enrolled in the Bible correspondence course and 85,000 Bible lessons have been dispatched from this Tokyo office." More than 4,000 copies of the Catechism and 10,000 New Testaments were mailed free of charge. The Lutheran Hour is well known in Japan.

NEWSPAPER EVANGELISM

The people of Japan are the most literate people in the world. The literacy rate stands at a high of 97.2. No other nation, East or West, can match it. You are aware of it wherever you go. Everywhere young people are reading books and magazines. Visit any book store and it is crowded with people.

Evangelism through the newspaper was

begun in 1921 and met with phenomenal success. The method consists of purchasing space in the newspaper to announce the principal teachings of the Christian faith, inviting those who wish to know more to write for a course of instruction by mail.

KONODAI

Originally a home for children threatened with TB, Konodai has become a home for abandoned children of mixed marriages.

JIAI-EN—COLONY OF MERCY

The colony of mercy has many fields of work—a children's home, home for the aged, and a home for blind and deaf children.

KYUSHU GAKUIN

Kyushu Gakuin in Kumamoto is the only Christian boys' school in southern Kyushu. It maintains a high standing in public opinion.

KYUSHU JO GAKUIN

This is a girls' high school and junior college in Kumamoto. Christian teachers are effective in their Christian witness by the way they approach a classroom activity. In presenting a subject they find opportunity to show it from the Christian viewpoint.

Chapel—Kyushu Gakuin



THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

We enter the administration building to see Dr. Chitose Kishi, head of the seminary and president of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Stop! See the bronze tablet over the door. Read the inscription:

*This building is the gift of
THE LUTHER LEAGUE
OF AMERICA*

*In Appreciation of which
This Plaque is Dedicated
by*

**THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY OF JAPAN
A.D. 1934**

Only 24 years ago the Luther Leaguers of America provided the funds for the construction of this building. Your own mother and dad probably had a hand in this project.

STUDENT CENTER

Primarily for ministering to Lutheran students in schools and universities of the capital city, the student center has become a welcome haven for all students. Here daily programs of Christian activity are offered. Christian witness is promoted by discussions, lectures, group projects, Bible study, recreation, counseling, and social programs. There is an attractive chapel where services are conducted.

Let's join the group in the social room. Hmm! Tea and cakes are being served. We'll enjoy this Japanese custom. The discussion begins with free prayer. Non-Christians are asking questions and the Christian students are telling what their faith means. Occasionally the pastor joins the conversation and attempts to clarify the answers.

BIBLE CLASSES

The avidity with which young people in Japan seek to know the Bible and the Christian teaching is one of the most thrilling opportunities given the church in Japan today. Everywhere Bible classes

in Japanese or English bring the youth of the land.

LUTHERAN LITERATURE SOCIETY

In 1954 the Society took over a Christian book store in Kobe. In two years this store became the second largest Christian book store in the country. Branches have been opened in several cities. The chief purpose is to make available good Christian books, particularly Lutheran devotional and theological books, periodicals, and tracts.

MINISTRY TO SPECIAL GROUPS

There is a chaplaincy service in the hospitals, among the deaf, and among prisoners.

CHRISTIAN KINDERGARTEN

Elementary education is conducted by the government alone. Therefore, the church has given its attention to pre-school, secondary, and higher education. There is a difference which people recognize between the Christian kindergarten and the ordinary kindergarten.

Today's Need in Japan

Today's need is for the continuation of a building program. The building program is envisioned not only in more structures of good and brick and stone, but in human being also.

For this great work of building, we need more missionaries, more evangelism, more teaching and preaching of the Gospel, more service in the name of Christ to every kind of human need.

Missionaries must be sent to the place of those who retire, and to fill the numbers of those required in the expanding program. Scholarship funds are needed to produce an educated leadership on the college level.

Special need is felt for women missionaries. Continued prayers are requested in behalf of pastors, teachers, missionaries, and others. Opportunities for sharing the message of the Gospel in Japan today are the most favorable ever known anywhere.

Christianity has its golden opportunity in Japan today.

Inside Middletown, U. S. A.



Presentation Pointers

Speak on the topic including the suggested Bible readings. The printed topic material should be suggestive of the contents of the speech. The emphasis should be on arousing the group for a vital discussion based on the Community Inventory. Try in the discussion to focus attention on three or four problems that need Christian action.

As a result of the discussion of community problems let the group form a special study

committee of those interested in further investigations or turn the whole group into a study committee. Have the study committee follow the procedures suggested in the topic material for further clarification of the problems selected, and for consultation about possible solutions. These consultations should include the pastor and/or youth adviser. Out of these consultations let the study committee formulate definite proposals that can be discussed and acted on by the whole group.

"FRAIDY CATS" should take a powder before following the suggestions in this article. Those with rosy-tinted glasses had better bring microscopes. We're going to find out what is inside the place where we live. . . . What is happening to the girl who dropped out of school? . . . Why does that cripple beg on the streets? . . . Why was the tavern down near the fire house closed up? . . . How did it happen that three children suffocated from gas fumes when the service man said he couldn't find any leak or fumes?

Our town, Middletown, is a very important place. We live in it, and what happens to us is important. What goes on in our town is what we and our parents and all the other people in Middletown cause to happen. We share responsibility for and we are affected by what we and our neighbors do and do not do.

Maybe somebody will want to start an argument there. So let's stop and look, with the microscope, not those rosy-tinted glasses. That girl who dropped out of school, someone said she'd gotten into "trouble." She didn't seem the type, never talked with boys much less went out with them. Matter of fact, she never talked much to anyone.

Do you remember when the guidance teacher came to one club and asked if we wouldn't draw her into our activities? But she was unattractive. So she was left out. Could it be that she dropped out of school because we ignored her? Could be. If so, we are involved.

If finding out what goes on inside our town is like this first case, maybe we'd better quit. Or maybe we'd better go on, full speed ahead.

How do we find out what's going on in our town? We all see things happening. Not only must we know what is happening, but we must also know how

to understand and judge the facts we uncover.

A Community Audit

A young girl came to her pastor asking how she might help to end the racial discrimination evident in her town. They talked awhile and soon realized that preaching and passing resolutions hadn't changed the practices very much. They finally decided to call together a larger, more representative group.

A goodly number of church and civic organizations appointed members to a self-study committee. This committee investigated employment practices in business and government. They found out how Negroes and other minorities were treated in restaurants, hotels, stores, theatres, parks, schools, and in the courts. They investigated clinics, hospitals, and found out about the housing situation. This community audit committee then published their report, took it before all their groups for study and discussion. As a result the conscience of the community was aroused. Some schools and places of business changed their employment and services policies. Other agencies and institutions which had had a policy of equality, became better known and were patronized.

Here certainly is evidence that a young person can vitally affect community life. The girl who asked her pastor about racial discrimination, knew what was going on in her town, and had a Christian standard by which to judge it all. She found a way to enlist others in her problem.

Youth groups can be guided by their faith into constructive action. Christianity believes in a God of love, whose own character and action constitute the fundamental order and law by which life is maintained. Love means concrete and practical ministry to men's needs. (Read Ephesians 3:14-21; 4:11-16; 5:21-31. Also 1 John 4:7-12; 3:11-18.) Here is our standard of judgment and our pattern for action.

It is necessary, however, to know how best to deal with the problem to achieve a successful solution. We must consult

those who understand the problems and have some experience in dealing with them before working out a course of action.

Ways of Being Aware

Here are five ways of keeping in touch with what is happening in Middletown. Let the group make "Operation Inside Middletown" be a continuing process, by adopting these methods.

- 1. Attend meetings of the board of education, town council, etc., as often as possible.
- 2. Read reports of such bodies and of town officials regularly.
- 3. Interview officials about emerging problems.
- 4. Observe events such as court trials, public meetings, political campaigns, etc.
- 5. Read newspapers presenting different points of view.

The Community Inventory

Predominant stock is? Other backgrounds include

.....

Languages other than English spoken in community

Languages used in ministry of local churches Describe the educational level of the community

Approximate population of area you consider your parish?

Describe the housing in your community—Note problems

.....

What is the average income for the family? Is it customary for more than the head of the household to work? What is the percentage of Negro Roman Catholic Jewish Others

Is there any factor from which the health of the community is suffering?

Is there a problem of alcoholism? Of mental disease?

Of unemployment? Of family stability? Of juvenile delinquency? Of the community's political life?

Our community is not homogeneous; it contains the following cultural, racial, social and economic strains

.....

What inter-racial, inter-cultural, industrial, and economic tensions need attention in our community?

.....

There are some groups in our city for whom there is an inadequate ministry:

.....

Describe the significant characteristics of the community: People, their life and work, the situations you consider unusual:

.....

.....

What percentage of community is actively churches? What percentage of the children receive regular religious instruction?

What do you think a community religious census might reveal?

.....

The Study Guide

A wide variety of sources of information will need to be studied to discover answers to the questions concerning your community. Often it will be necessary to contact public officials or the heads of private and voluntary agencies. You will usually be welcomed, especially if an appointment is made in advance with the chief administrative head. The following suggestions should be of considerable help:

1. Your local or state library should have a copy of the historical study of the municipalities of the state produced by the W. P. A. It will give good background material about your community. These libraries may also have copies of other studies about your community which the librarians will help you locate. They may keep a file of census publications, or the librarian can tell you where to locate census material regarding income,

housing, occupational diversification, agricultural and industrial spread, etc.

2. Public officials can help provide information. The county public health officers, the superintendent of schools, the court probation and parole officer all deal with certain problems raised in the Inventory. So, too, the executive head of the chamber of commerce or the county agricultural agent may need to be consulted. If you have a state or city civil rights or fair employment practices commission, its executive can tell about ethnic strains and inter-group tensions.

3. Further information can be provided by your council of social agencies, city or county council of churches, or the local office of the Red Cross. Let the study group decide whom to seek out. The same questions may be asked of several different people, and their answers collated.

The Group Program

What are the major problems of your community in the following areas, and what can our group do about them?

Race:
Industrial relations:
Sanitation:
Safety:
Health:
Education:
Welfare:
Housing:
Transportation:
Politics:
Employment:
Land Ownership:
Group Tensions:
Recreation:



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Presentation Pointers

Have three people present this topic. One person speaks on the name of God, the second on people's names, and the third to introduce and fill in various parts.

Be sure to read the Scriptural references that are given. They are essential. Discuss the questions.

YOU have a name. What is its purpose? Mine serves as an identification tag. Amid the profusion of Johnsons, Smiths, Browns, and Joneses, it's imperative that one has his own distinctive appellation. How do you use your identification tag?

Name of God

In ancient times the name of a god called to mind the character of that deity. What, then, are the things we think of when we hear the name of our God—Lord God Almighty, Creator, Supreme, Judge, Searcher of Hearts, Refuge and Strength, Saviour, Jehovah, Living God,

God of Hosts, Holy One, Lord of Lords, Mighty God, Most High, Father of Lights, Lord of Sabaoth, King of Kings, Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Comforter, and Teacher. His attributes are eternal, immutable, invisible, incomprehensible, unsearchable, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, justice, knowledge, wisdom, power, faithfulness, truth, goodness, mercy, love, and judgment.

In Jesus' Name

God's name is worthy of our praise. (Read Psalms 34:1-3; 72:17-19.)

God has given His worthy name to Jesus so that His name we should fall down and worship.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Miracles were done in Jesus' name. (Read Acts 3:1-6; 4:7-10.) We are given the promise—"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

In ancient days the sound of the name of a god seemed to have magical power. Therefore, this crude idea was transferred to the phrase, "praying in the name of Jesus." This is not a magical charm we add to our prayers. In reality, the phrase is far more richer. It implies that our prayers should be made in the *spirit* of Jesus Christ. The spirit of prayer is what Jesus referred to when he said, "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

Paul, in addition, in his letter to the Ephesians, says, "always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."

Read the reason John gives for writing His Gospel—John 20:30-31. Only through Jesus are we saved. No one else in the world can save us. (Read Acts 4:12.)

Listen to God's commandment concerning His Name—

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Read these other references about God's name: Micah 4:5; Isaiah 57:15; Jeremiah 10:6; Matthew 6:9; Luke 24:47.

Your Name

What's this got to do with your name? Plenty!

What do you think of when you hear historical names? Washington . . . Lincoln . . . Hitler . . . Immediately you think of personalities, the qualities these men possessed.

What are your mental reactions when you hear these names? Mary . . . Rose Ann . . . Sally . . . Tom . . . Steve . . . Donald . . . Name some of your friends. The minute you say the name, you think of the qualities that person possesses.

by Margaret Freeman

Mary Smith. Good old Mary! She's always willing to help, whether it's to sing a solo, bake cookies, or take care of the baby. Tom. Tom, the dependable. No matter how busy his schedule, he's willing to take the devotions for league Sunday night.

Other names bring other visions—some good, some bad, some indifferent.

Now, the same thing happens to other people at the mention of your name. Your name stirs up an image in their minds. When people think of your name, they think of what you are—selfish, helpful, cranky, smiling, talented, unreliable, a liar, etc. You are exactly what you make yourself.

Let's Resolve

1. Keep God's name sacred so people will know instinctively that you love and honor Him.

2. Keep your name above reproach so the minute anyone hears your name or thinks of you, they will have confidence in you and your character. When untrue gossip floats around about a person who is honest and sincere, most people will say, "I don't believe it!"

3. Never besmirch anyone else's name. Doesn't it hurt when you're accused of doing such and such and there is not a grain of truth in it?

Rather than Riches

A clear appellation is exactly what you want to maintain. Proverbs 22:1 records, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches."

What's in a name? Everything you need to be an effective witness for Christ. That's why we're here. God has a right to demand our loyalty and obedience to Him. Therein lies true happiness.

Discussion Questions

Why do people swear? How can we stop profane and careless language? What are some examples of profane living? Why do people gossip? How can we become effective witnesses for Christ?

My Luther League

by Mrs. Robert Baker

LUTHER LEAGUE is the name used by many local young people's societies of Lutheran Churches. Societies of this nature had appeared in a few Lutheran congregations before the Civil War, but their introduction did not become general in eastern states until after 1890.

The first state association was formed in New York in 1893. In October 1895, the Luther League of America was organized in Pittsburgh as a national federation; it is now an official auxiliary of the United Lutheran Church.

Similar societies were formed in other Lutheran bodies. In 1893 a General Alliance, now called the International Walther League, was founded in the Missouri Synod. In 1894, a Luther League federation was organized in what is now the American Lutheran Church. Neither of these flourished until World War I when other Lutheran bodies in the Middle West also formed Luther League federations. Today there are about 400,000 young people in 13,000 local leagues throughout the United States and Canada.

The youth who is centered in Christ can weather even the roughest storm without getting drenched or thrown overboard. He has an anchor . . . something

to keep him on an even keel so that he doesn't get tossed about with every wave or craze that comes along. All the abnormalities of these days make a teenager's life hazy. It takes more than parental "thou-shalt-nots" to steer a straight course. It takes the love and protection of the Heavenly Father, the strength against temptation that only He can give, and the positive advice and guidance that are in His Holy Word.

The Luther League is one of our strongest allies in keeping youth as champions of Christian faith and practice. Its well-balanced program of worshiping, studying, playing, and working together gives the leaguer everything he needs for a fully-developed personality.

This being true there's only one logical conclusion: *every teener should be a leaguer*. It is then our duty as leaguers to encourage all our friends to become workers with Christ by means of our personal evangelism.

What does Luther League do?

It **TEACHES** real devotion to Jesus Christ, not long-faced pietism or rank modernism.

It **CULTIVATES** spiritual zeal. It fires you to go all out for the Lord instead of remaining silent and smug, ignoring the spiritual peril of others.

It **DEVELOPS LEADERS** . . . gives them a job to do . . . a job that captivates their zest and imagination and trains them for intelligent church leadership.

It **ENCOURAGES BIBLE STUDY**, regular church attendance . . . discourages spiritual laziness and delinquency.

It **TEACHES 100% AMERICANISM** . . . Americanism . . . the kind that follows through with actual service to the community instead of merely waving a flag and shouting, "Rah, rah America!"

It **PUTS CHRIST FIRST**, others second, and self last . . . in contrast to the popular me, myself, and I policy.

It **ENCOURAGES** the proper **STEWARDSHIP** of time, talent, and money . . . returning to God His fair share before budgeting for self, not after.

Perhaps you are wondering how the Luther League can do so much. The Luther League is divided into committees to carry out this program.

I am Christian Vocation. My duty is to develop a program:

- a. to foster in the youth of the Church a sense of Christ's claim upon their lives.
- b. to assist youth in finding ways of fulfilling God's will in their lives.
- c. to fortify youth through devotional life.

Christians must consider all action as part of their relationship to God. God calls us to earn money, to take a job, to build a home. Why? To serve a greater purpose: to glorify Him and to serve our fellow men. This is the first gift of life in the Church through the league—the chance to study and plan our lives as called and directed by God. Our church and our league will guide us, not only in making a living, but also in making a life, a Christian life.

I am Evangelism and my duty is to develop a program:

- a. to encourage personal witnessing by young people of the Church.
- b. to stimulate use of young people in congregational programs of evangelism and enlistment.
- c. to distribute materials to guide youth organizations in approved methods of winning unchurched persons for Christ.

Our league work is going to guide us in doing something about our own community. Here we will plan to go out and win other young people for our league and for our church. We're going to help get more members for the church and Sunday school, and choirs. We young Christians know that youth can share "the good news" with other young people better than adults can.

I am Missions and my duty is to develop a program:

- a. to study mission work at home and abroad.
- b. to enlist the interest and service of young people in benevolent

activities.

Did you know that about every five days a new congregation is born in the United Lutheran Church? Every week at least one new Lutheran church building is started. The church is growing and spreading just as Christ planned it would. Luther Leagues share in spreading the Gospel through our own congregation. And we also take our share of responsibility in the synod of the ULCA.

I am Social Action and my duty is to develop a program:

- a. to alert youth to their responsibility as Christians in social problems.
- b. to encourage youth to study our social structure.
- c. to guide them in forming Christian convictions.
- d. to stimulate Christian action.

There are things in our communities that need to be changed and bettered. But, who's going to do it? Someone must promote better understanding among races and other tension groups. Somebody in every community must work for civic improvements. Our studies and projects in league will help us to see clearly our task in our communities. We will learn God's plan for individuals and communities and share it with them.

I am Recreation and my duty is to develop a program:

- a. to recommend types of wholesome recreation for youth.
- b. to channel recreational programs and information to such groups.

Recreation is important. We have fun, but we also develop a deeper appreciation of one another. In league we learn how to have the best good times with the finest type of people.

I hope we will remember these five important phases of league work. Peter has stated in his second letter, 3:18, "Grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Through Luther League this spiritual growth becomes ours and is necessary so that we may do a good job as we serve Christ through our church and community.

Presentation Pointers

These six scenes take only five characters. The first scene could be done with the curtain closed (or an empty stage) and voices coming from off stage. The second scene is very simple. You may use chairs or have the leaguers standing. The third and fourth scenes require only a table and chair and pen or pencil for writing on paper. The sixth scene could be arranged with the panel sitting in a semicircle facing the audience.

The play can be made longer by adding lines such as the suggestions as to where to get addresses and the value of having pen pals.

If you have members who have pen pals, they might have their own panel after the presentation or they might display things they have received from overseas pen pals.

For worship: 1 John 4:16-21; Hymns 219, 227, 382 (CSB); and Collects 21 (138) and 53 (143) from the *Common Service Book*.

FRIENDS IN FAR AWAY PLACES

by verta scott

Scene 1

(This short scene takes place at a Luther League meeting. As the scene opens the leaguers are singing the last stanza of hymn 227, CSB. As they finish, Elaine stands up to lead the topic.)

ELAINE: How would you like to carry on paper conversations with people you've never seen? Have your inky voice heard in far away places? This is the thrill of having a pen pal in some distant land.

Scene 2

(Refreshment time at the league meeting. Informal group, drinking cokes, eating pretzels, standing or sitting.)

ANN: As if we don't have enough school work to do! Imagine, writing a letter to some other leaguers. Mrs. Sims gets some of the wackiest ideas. If all leagues are as dull as ours we'd just be wasting time and stamps.

TOM: Mrs. Sims didn't say we had to have a pen pal. It was just a suggestion. Besides, all leagues may not be as dull as ours.

BETH: Sure, we might get some good ideas from other leaguers on how to improve our own league.

ANN: Well, Joe, what do you think about this idea of writing to a pen pal?

JOE: I think it's a swell idea! Just think, we could get to know boys and girls all over the world. And we can tell them about ourselves—our hobbies, our schools, and Luther League.

PEN PALS



ANN: Sounds good. But what can we say about our league?

TOM: I think we should be truthful about it. That's the best way to get advice.

BETH: Let's ask Elaine more about this pen pal idea. She did such a terrific job in her topic presentation. *(Calls Elaine to their group.)* Let's hear more about this pen pal idea. Can you give us some good rules to remember?

ELAINE: Let's make a list. *(Writes the bold face phrases on the blackboard. As she mentions each, the characters should be informal enough that they can make comments to keep the scene moving.)* First of all, **start with things you have in common.** If you get the name from **HIGH IDEALS**, let your new friend know you read the magazine too. You don't have to give vital statistics in your first letter—it sounds like a questionnaire you're filling out. Say casual, newsy, lively things. So the person to whom you're writing collects bugs. Tell him you collect bugs also. Or if afraid of bugs, ask about them. Questions about another's hobby may start you on a new hobby you never dreamed you'd enjoy. **Write about points of difference.** This is especially for foreign correspondents. I got a letter from a girl in Scotland mentioning tartan. I wrote and asked her exactly what it was. She sent me a sample of her family plaid and other plaids used by families in Scotland. **Don't take on more correspondents than you can handle.** Nothing is more disappointing for your pen pals than to find that they're at the end of a long waiting list of people to whom you write. **Make each friendship one of giving, not of getting.** If you are a collector, don't hint for a donation. Find out your pen pals' interests and give something first.

BETH: You know, maybe we could write some letters and then exchange with one another at a league meeting the things we have learned through our correspondence.

ELAINE: Sure! You'll find writing to others is a thrilling hobby.

BETH: I'd like to write to someone overseas. Maybe you can help me dig up an address, Elaine.

ELAINE: I'd be glad to, Beth. *(The girls come closer and begin talking in low voices as the curtain closes.)*

Scene 3

(Ann is seated at a table or desk writing a letter. As she speaks she writes. At intervals she should look up and gaze into space as she plans what to say next. Or she could chew on her pencil or tap the pencil on the table.)

Dear Mary,

I got your name in the latest issue of HIGH IDEALS. I am in 8th grade at Manton High School. I don't have any favorite subjects because I don't like school.

My hobby is listening to the latest records and collecting anything about Tab Hunter (he's the most!)

I go to First Lutheran Church and its Luther League. They asked me to be worship leader, but I didn't know what to do so I said no. Sometimes, when I go, I play the piano to help Mrs. Sims out. She's our advisor.

If you could give us any ideas as to what is wrong with our Luther League we would certainly appreciate it. Believe me, we're dead—just not buried!

Sincerely yours,
Ann Zeiner

Scene 4

(Same as preceding. Tom is writing a letter.)

Dear Bill,

Since you and I both are amateur photographers, I decided to pick you as my pen pal. My last name is Adams (not related to the President). I'm in 9th grade at Northern High School. I would like to be a doctor some day.

I am an acolyte at First Lutheran Church where I was confirmed two years ago. I'm in the intermediate league which, incidentally, could stand a shot in the arm at this point. Our latest project is to develop a Christian friendship through pen pals. Don't you think this is a good idea! There is so much to learn—and so much to share!

Taking pictures has interested me since I was about eight years old when I received my first camera. What a thrill! Now I develop my own pictures and make my own slides to project at school. Oh yes, I'm president of the camera club at school. Please write soon!

Your new friend,
Tom

Scene 5

(Two weeks later. A Luther League meeting. Ann runs on to the stage.)

ANN: Say kids, I got an answer from my new pen pal!

BETH: What did she say?

ANN: She gave me all kinds of ideas for projects and topics and everything. Boy, their league is on the ball! And *(looks around)*, is Mrs. Sims here yet? *(Several say "no.")* Well, Mary says her mother is the advisor of their intermediate group at church and she—Mary—knows the problems an advisor has to face. She says sometimes the kids don't cooperate and try to make the league meeting interesting. They don't come regularly and it's hard for the advisor to keep meetings and projects tied together. You know, that makes sense!

JOE: Gee, I never looked at it that way before! Maybe we do make it rough for Mrs. Sims.

ANN: Mary says advisors are always glad for suggestions on how to pep up new meetings. Let's think what we can do to change our situation.

Scene 6

(Five months later, the leaguers are gathered together to share their letters from overseas friends.)

ANN: Some of our leaguers have carried their personalities to far away places

Our panel this evening will share the riches they have gained. Beth . . .

BETH: One of my overseas pen friends is from the British Isles. She has sent me pictures of Queen Elizabeth and told me interesting things about their kingdom. I, in turn, have been able to compare our democratic way of living. In her last letter she explained that English schools are called grammar schools, principals are headmasters, boy pupils are called by their last names, and they start foreign languages when they are eleven years old. Their games are netball, hockey, rounders, and cricket. She sent me some pictures and instructions on playing these games. These items are on the display table.

ELAINE: For several months now I have been writing to a girl in Japan. She goes to our Lutheran School in Kumamoto where she has learned to read and write English. Their way of life is so different than ours—and she has so much to share.

TOM: The same with my pen pal from India. Boy, are their dating customs odd! I'm glad I'm in the States!

ELAINE: But the reasoning behind their ideas is so unique. I'd love to visit Japan someday. In fact, I'm going to study all I can on Japan and maybe someday I can go there as a missionary and teach in that school to which Kei goes now.

ANN: I think Elaine has shown us one way in which we grow as we write to our new-found friends. As we learn more about these people in other countries, we find our attitudes changing—our lives changing.

BETH: I think all of us have grown in some way through our correspondence.

TOM: I got wonderful news from my pen pal, Sundara. His older brother is an exchange student at Central College. And my parents have invited him to our home for Easter vacation. I'm anxious to meet him.

ELAINE: You and your parents will have so much of the true Christian spirit to give him at Easter time, too, Tom.

BETH: Will you share him with us, Tom?

ANN: Let's have a special dinner meeting with him as our guest. It would be interesting to hear of the customs of his country.

BETH: Tell them Elaine, of your clever way to keep track of your pen pals.

ELAINE: Oh, my map! I have a map of the world on my bedroom wall. On this I place bright-headed pins in every place where I have a pen pal. It's a cheery reminder to know you have friends in so many places!

Benefits

1. Fun.
2. Leisure-time hobby.
3. Information valuable in school.
4. Goodwill among nations, countries, religion—so important in our present world and the world of the future.
5. Sharing ideas on improving Luther Leagues.
6. Learn about interesting customs in other countries.
7. Be a Christian witness—state what you believe and why.
8. Help someone who is lonely or sad find happiness.

Where to Get Addresses

1. Pen Friends Division
English-Speaking Union, 16 East 69th Street
New York 21, N. Y.
2. Overseas Correspondence Section

Council for Education in World Citizenship
25 Charles Street
London W. 1, England

For persons between 10-18 years.

3. Hobby magazines.
4. HIGH IDEALS pen pal pages
5. Other magazines.
6. Language department in the school you attend.
7. Write to a foreign missionary asking her to suggest someone to whom you can write.
8. Get addresses from a friend or from another pen pal.

See page 48 of this issue for leaguer's addresses.

THE ANGEL and JOHN DOE

by frank k. efird

Presentation Pointers

Have someone read or tell this story to the group. At the end another voice should read the Scripture reference. Discuss the topic. List on a blackboard the times that Joe Doe could have been a Christian and wasn't. What were his excuses? Do we ever use those excuses?

List ways on the blackboard that leaguers can be active in the church. Maybe you will want to plan a project based on one of these ideas.

THE car that hit John Doe that bright morning in June wasn't speeding. No one on earth could say why John stepped out in front of it. More than likely he had a lot on his mind. His wife remembered that he had been rather serious when he left home.

"Two things in life I'm going to have more—money and power," he had told her with determination on his face. "If I can swing about two more deals like the one that's coming up this morning, I'll have both. Then, darling, we'll be sitting on top of the world. We won't have a thing to worry about."

The words kept going over and over in her mind after he left. Money and power. Certainly they could be used for a lot of good . . . and a lot of evil. John wanted them. And it looked as if he would get them.

Money and power . . . She didn't recall much the preacher said, or how the flowers looked. The solo was beautiful. She remembered some of the words sounding strangely like an Easter hymn. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." . . . Money and power.

John had never felt so strange before. It was a little like being buoyed up by a cloud. But there weren't any clouds around.

Suddenly he found himself before a great white door. Its outside seemed familiar. He'd seen a door that looked a bit like that somewhere before. Oh yes, he recalled, the church that had his name on the roll had a door resembling that. He was glad now that he had attended on Palm Sunday. At the time he had been a little disgruntled at having to go just to see his daughter confirmed.

The door opened and someone stepped out in front of him. The creature looked a lot like a figure he had seen on a Sunday school leaflet when he was a boy.

"Why this . . . this . . . this must be an angel," he thought to himself.

The radiant being apparently recog-

nized his thoughts.

"Yes," he said, "you're right."

"What's on the other side of that door?" asked John.

The angel smiled sadly and said, "Have you ever read a book called Revelation?"

"Revelation? Revelation? Was that a book?" He began to feel as if he were on a quiz program.

"Yes," said the white robed being. "It was in the back of a large book your wife left on the dresser in the bed room."

"Oh! *That* book!" John exclaimed, "talking for time until he could remember it." "The black one with gold letters on the front. . . . The Bible! Sure! You know, I was so busy I didn't get . . ."

"I've heard that before," the angel interrupted. "I suppose you've guessed by now what's beyond that door. What do you think?"

"Heaven?" asked John uncertainly.

"Right," answered the angel.

Before John could stop it, a question popped into his mind. "Wonder if it's as pretty as the new office building we were putting up?" As quickly as he could he wiped the thought away, hoping the angel had not noticed it.

Now he spoke aloud. "I'd sure like to get in. I'd been meaning to send a check to the church. Suppose I write one now for 20 thousand dollars." He began to feel about for his check book. It wasn't there.

"That wouldn't help now," the angel said. "I was just wondering. You were a Christian, or had your name on your church roll. What did you think of Jesus Christ?"

"I remember some stories I heard about him . . . or was it Samson . . . in Sunday school. And they spoke of him on Palm Sunday when I attended church. I really didn't have time . . . my business kept me so. . . ."

"I hate to interrupt," said the angel, "but what did you do to help your brother when his wife was so ill, and he had to lose his home?"

"I felt sorry for him," John angrily exclaimed, "but he brought most of it on himself. I can see that you don't under-

stand people very well. Probably you need someone like me in there. Perhaps you don't know that I was a leader in the business world with a responsible position. I got the greatest efficiency out of my men."

"We don't need that," answered the door keeper. "In there everybody serves everybody else. And by the way, what about that fellow you fired in anger because he made a mistake that cost the company a hundred dollars? Did you ever check to see what happened to his family?"

"I was just too . . ."

Again the angel wearily interrupted. "Yes, I know. But just one more question. Why didn't you use some of that executive ability you have when they asked your help in that church where you had your name?"

"Well, after all, I had to make a living. And I was kept awfully, awfully . . ."

The angel sadly shook his head as the figure of John Doe began to move away from him, getting smaller and smaller in the distance.

He remembered another man who faced him before the gates of heaven. He knew about him before he arrived because he had heard the King, now inside those doors, describe him.

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room to bestow my fruits?

And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

And God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God. (Luke 12:16-21).

1. Are you quick to express appreciation for other's good qualities? _____
2. Are you at ease in most situations? _____
3. Do you show your friends you are interested in what they're doing? _____
4. Do you have a friendly smile? _____
5. Is your appearance pleasing? Neat, healthy looking? _____
6. Are you intelligently interested in the world around you? _____
7. Have you good posture and an alert bearing? _____
8. Are you enthusiastic about plans the group may make? _____
9. Are you a good sport? _____
10. Are you considerate? _____
11. Do you avoid acting in a possessive manner toward other boy and girl friends? _____
12. Do you enjoy your friends for their own sake, and not for what they can do for you? _____

how do you stand out in a group?

how do you look in black and white?



Presentation Pointers

Ask each member to jot down the virtues of his best friends. These unsigned papers might be collected and read by the leader with similarities noted. A blackboard would be useful, the leader listing each quality or personality trait mentioned, with checks beside the ones given frequently.

The self-rating charts should be mimeographed and distributed at the close of the meeting.

For discussion you might use these questions:

1. Can you think of any famous friendships either in history or literature? What qualities made these friendships endure? David and Jonathan; Ruth and Naomi; Helen Keller and her companion-teacher, Anne Sullivan; Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn; and Caesar and Brutus (why did this friendship fall apart?).

2. How can you be friends with your parents?

3. What about relationship with God? What does this relationship require?

PERSONALITY PETE

by virginia westervelt

WHAT'S Pete got that I haven't?" stormed Jim. "He always gets elected to everything. Captain of the basketball team, president of the class, editor of the paper, chairman of the prom committee;—jeeppers, can't they give somebody else a chance?"

"Yeah, I know how you feel, Jim," Mike sympathized, "particularly when he's taking your girl to the dance Friday, huh?"

"Oh, who wants to go with Sally. She's not so much?"

"Wouldn't be sour grapes, old boy, would it? Sally's a mighty popular gal."

"Popular!" snorted Jim. "That's all I hear. Who wants to be popular?"

It's a safe enough bet that Jim does. Most of us do. But someone ought to tell Jim that griping never brought friends flocking around. Trying to cut someone down to your size merely makes you smaller. But if Jim had faced his own problem squarely, and analyzed Pete's and Sally's popularity, he might have come up with some interesting answers.

What is popularity? How do you acquire real friends? Are you satisfied with your personality?

It might be well to review very briefly what the psychologists have to say about this personality business. You don't have to go on an analyst's couch to know that one of our basic needs is to be loved and admired.

Your kid brother tries to get your attention by saying, "Watch me; see how high I can climb." Winning that prize essay contest was nice going, but wasn't half the fun in accepting the congratulations of your friends?

Yes, we all want and need friends. We want to be part of a crowd which approves of us. If you belong to a crowd; if you have hosts of friends, be thankful that it seems to "come naturally" to you.

Perhaps you can help others who don't have your poise.

And if you're one of the extremely large group of shy, self-conscious, aloof people, and you'd like to run with the herd more often, to have many good friends, don't be afraid to do a bit of analyzing.

Would you like YOURSELF for a friend? Are you inclined to be like Jim—grumbling, dissatisfied, jealous? Or are you usually even tempered, enthusiastic, considerate of others? Are you interested in life? That is, do you look on every new experience as an adventure, or do you get tongue-tied and embarrassed, for instance, if you're asked to speak before some organization, or to be chairman of some committee?

Do you recognize others' good qualities, and tell them so? It's strange, when we know how everyone likes to be admired, that we don't compliment our friends and acquaintances more often. Flattery, of course, is out, because it's insincere. But look for good points in the people you'd like to have for friends. "You certainly have a knack for getting along with the older teachers. How do you do it?" or "It's fun going out with you, Frank. You always seem to enjoy everything so."

But suppose you're ill at ease on a date. If so, don't try to cover it up by laughing or talking too much and too loudly, or by going to the opposite extreme and retiring into your corner or your shell. That just advertises your embarrassment.

Instead, stop trying so hard to impress the popular ones. Cultivate friendships with "ineligibles," the practice your conversational ability on your father's friends, or that studious grind over there in the corner that no one ever notices. With a little imagination, you can endow anyone with enough glamor to act as a grindstone for your personality axe. And the more you sharpen it in actual practice, the wider swath you can cut when it really matters. (Besides, you sometimes discover some interesting friends this way.)

How do you get someone interested in

you? Well, no one has been able to improve on the old adage, "If you would have a friend, be one." Be interested in what your friend is doing, what he is thinking. Most of us have opinions, and we love to be consulted, don't we? "What do you think of . . ." is a wonderful conversational starter, and the subject can be anything from the Dodgers' latest game to the war situation.

Incidentally, part of your homework should be to read one newspaper thoroughly, not just the headlines. The more you know of what's going on, the more interesting a person you'll be, and the more able you'll be to give out with an opinion if someone ask YOU.

So the first thing you need for a Friendship Kit, is friendliness—an interest in other people, their opinions, their ideas, their hobbies. (A word of caution: Don't let your reconnaissance turn into pursuit tactics. An over-anxious zealot often frightens friends away.)

But genuine interest and enthusiasm are hard to resist.

A group of boys once drew up a list of qualities their ideal girl should have. First on their rating chart was not beauty or brains, but simply enthusiasm. A peppy, wide awake person who likes to have fun, full of life, fond of dancing, hiking, attending or participating in sports events.

Next on their list, to be truthful, was appearance. But still, not beauty. "Glowing," was the word they used. One who dresses neatly and appropriately, knows how to wear makeup without being obvious, has a friendly smile, a pleasant disposition, good posture, alert bearing, and poise.

Number three was good sportsmanship, tact, considerateness (of a boy's feelings, and also of his financial state.)

And finally, warmth and cordiality. They felt there was no reason for a girl to act stilted and unnatural just because she was talking to a boy. (And the girls said the same thing.)

But that takes practice. Joining clubs and other organizations where there are

both boys and girls will widen your social horizon and give you greater opportunities for making friends.

And did the girls have a magic formula for the boys to follow if they want to be well liked? Again it wasn't good looks which headed the list. Girls liked a fellow who was poised and dependable, who could act his age and not clown all the time, someone who could talk with her parents intelligently enough so that they would approve of him and trust him.

Well groomed and neat were the only requirements for a personal appearance, with good posture important.

The girls admired courage, someone not afraid to stand up for his convictions, not afraid of hard work, eager to help others.

Courtesy, consideration, loyalty, and sincerity completed their list. They liked a boy to drive carefully, if he had a car, and to be concerned with whether or not the girl had a good time. And they resented being handed an insincere line, being merely an audience for the male ego. A girl wants to be liked for herself, they said, and she doesn't like to feel that a boy is discussing her with the other fellows. If he doesn't value her friendship more than that, he isn't a real friend.

Put the two lists together, and what do you find? If you want to have a friend,

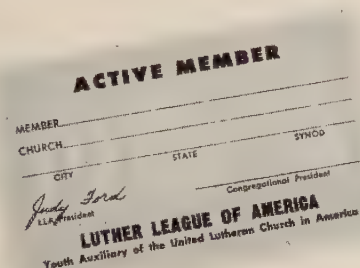
be one. And if you want to be one, check up on yourself to see whether you are:

1. Enthusiastic, friendly, interested in many things.
2. Dependable, intelligent, poised.
3. Neat and well groomed, with good posture.
4. Courageous and a good sport.
5. Considerate, courteous, tactful.
6. Cordial, warm, sincere, helpful.
7. Loyal.

There's a great deal more that could be said about making friends, and keeping them. Some who are your friends now, will still be your friends 20 years from now, if you want it that way. But it takes skill, and a measure of maturity.

A good friendship, like a good marriage, usually doesn't just happen. It's built up, over a period of years. Founded on a mutual trust and affection, it is nourished by consideration and loyalty, strengthened by sharing, and steadied by faith.

It can be lost, irretrievably, through indifference or neglect. It can slip away "like water spilled on thankless sand." A true friendship, with its inherent qualities of understanding and sympathy, is rare enough to be treasured, for it can conquer both time and space, and transcend the barriers of individuality. But a fractured friendship leaves, at best, a scar, and sometimes a wound which never heals.



Have you ordered
your 1958
membership card?

see January LUTHER LIFE for rededication service

Esther Had Courage

But

Presentation Pointers

Let the leaguers do their own research for this Bible study. First, use the introduction and "Courageous, But—" as your own introduction. Then divide into several groups. Assign one group to read Esther and prepare to tell the story. A second group could hunt for lessons or morals in the story. A third group should have a copy of **HIGH IDEALS**, other reference books, commentaries, a Bible dictionary, etc. to make a study of the Feast of Purim. Another group might prepare something on the pro and con ideas as to the truth of the reliability of the Book.

Have your groups make reports and discuss the Book. Present the section, "No Religion and Morals" and let the leaguers decide how they prefer to continue the study of the Book.

Bible Study

Order free from LLA office the flier "The Way the Ball Bounces" on interracial ideas. "About People," an eight-page comic book illustrating common origins of all men and need for interreligious and interracial understanding, (5c each or 100 for \$1.50) from Anti-Defamation League, 515 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N.Y.

There is much one can learn from the Bible.

There are many passages written in the affirmative—passages through which we learn the godly way to live. And there are sections of the Bible that are negative—sections that say *don't follow this example*.

Perhaps the Sermon on the Mount il-

by Eleanor Dively Mora

ustrates the affirmative section of the Bible. The teachings of Jesus are goals for which we can strive. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

An instance of the negative learning is in the Book of Esther. This Book tells you how *not* to live! If Esther's moral teachings were to be written in a motto, it would read, "Love your kindred and hate your enemies."

Courageous, But . . .

I can see eyebrows rising and angry replies. "Has the writer gone mad?" you say. "Esther is famous for her courage and beauty!"

Surely, I agree. Esther was courageous. But do you know why?

When I was a child in Sunday School I heard that Esther was courageous. I naively nodded my head and agreed. Then I opened my Bible to the Book of Esther and read for myself.

Esther was courageous. She was also selfish and merciless. Esther went before the king to save herself and her family—not her people. 4:14 is the key verse. If she had kept silence, someone else would have saved her people, but her family would have perished. Would you not have been courageous if you were placed in the same spot? Esther was guilty of the racial interance which the Book aims to condemn.

Yes, Esther was beautiful, too. She

had exceptional physical beauty and personal charm. But she used it on the king for her own selfish desires.

Martin Luther has said of the Book of Esther, "I am so hostile with this book that I wish it did not exist; for it Judaizes too much and has much heathen naughtiness." A noted commentary explains that if Christians were to use this Book as a teaching of morals, it would be an invitation to a war of conquest and revenge. Another commentary calls it a "charmingly written, romantic, and sometimes noble story" but it "reflects racial jingoism characterized by secularization."

The Story

King Ahaseurus becomes angry with Queen Vashti and has her banished from the kingdom. In searching for a maiden to take her place, he discovers Esther whose beauty overwhelms him. She is made queen.

A man named Haman is given a high position in the kingdom. But there is one person who disturbed him. It is Mordecai (Esther's uncle—a Jew). He is furious with Mordecai because he refuses to bow down and give obeisance to Haman. Haman, not satisfied with punishing Mordecai alone, wants death brought to all the Jewish people. He persuades the King to write an edict stating that all Jews should be killed. Neither the King nor Haman know that the Queen is a Jew herself.

Mordecai pleads with Esther to go be-

As I prepared this topic, my eyes fell on an ink blotter on my desk. It reads, "Let's keep America's Young People free from Religious and Racial Prejudice." That's a good motto.

fore the King to save her people. Finally she submits and goes into the King's presence. There is a law that no one is to go before the King unless summoned. She will be put to death unless the King touches her with his golden scepter. He spares her and grants her any wish she may have.

At a meal planned by Queen Esther for the King and Haman, Esther asks that her people and she might be spared from annihilation. The King asks who plans to do this and Esther points an accusing finger at Haman. Haman then is hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

Now, unfortunately, Esther is not satisfied with Haman's death. She wants blood. So she asks for retaliation. A day is given the Jews on which they may kill anyone who is their enemy. Five hundred are killed that day in the capital city alone. Still this is not enough. Esther asks for another day of killings. Her wish is granted by the King.

Then the Jews proclaim a holiday and call it the Feast of Purim.

Feast of Purim

The Feast of Purim has always been popular when anti-Semitism is popular in society. At the beginning, the Feast of Purim, held on the 14th and 15th days of Adar, 12th month of the Jewish year (February-March), was not a religious festival. It was a social and political celebration. The Book of Esther was read in the synagogues at this time. The congregation participated by ejaculating curses on Haman and praises for Esther and Mordecai. Rabbinic academies were reluctant to accept it as part of the Scriptures. But the popularity of the Book forced Esther to be placed in the canon somewhere between 125-175 A.D.

Its Value

The chief value of the book—besides being a good story—lies in its frank revelation of one side of the Jewish character. It is extremely important for understanding ethos of Judaism. As historical fiction, the Book had a purpose and fulfilled its purpose.

Why Was It Written

The Book of Esther is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Lack of religious elements and moral conceptions is probably the reason for this. In fact, the religious element was so gravely wanting that an addition to the Book was made in the Apocrypha. It was called "The Rest of the Book of Esther."

Why was this Book written if it is filled with such cruelties and looked upon with such antagonism? Possibly it served two purposes.

1. Esther was written to justify a celebration (the Feast of Purim) for which there was no basis in the Law. The origin of this Feast is uncertain. Perhaps it was a Persian Festival celebrated while the Jews were in captivity. So in order to give this Persian celebration a Jewish background, a Persian Jew wrote the story of Esther. Thus, the Festival of Judea's scattered children was synchronized with the Jewish political revival of the time.

2. Showing bitter fanaticism, evidently it was written while the extreme cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes were still fresh in memories. Every pious Jew was convinced that his enemy was really the enemy of God. These hardships culminated in the Maccabean wars, a period when forced conversion to Judaism and retaliating massacres were common. To justify this attitude and these happenings, the Book of Esther was written.

Is It True?

The author of the Book is unknown. When it was written is not known. We can estimate that it was written around 50 B.C. First mention of the Book is made in 2 Maccabeus 15:36 (the Apocrypha).

The names of the main characters are of Mesopotamian origin. Ahasuerus was the Persian Xerxes I. Esther (whose Jewish name is Haddassah) was a Babylonian goddess of love. Mordecai was a chief Babylonian god; and Vashti, an Elamite goddess.

Is it true? Was there a Queen named Esther? Did these things really occur? We don't know. There are arguments pro and con.

Pro

1. There is correct and detailed description of some Persian manners (as we know them now through Greek historians) and of the royal palace at Susa (which has been excavated).

2. The author has authoritative familiarity with

- a. architectural plans 1:5, 2:11, 21, 7:8
- b. banquet customs 1:6-8, 5:5f.
- c. court protocol 4:11, 8:11, 5:1,2, 3:10, 8:2
- d. royal harem 2:8, 12-18
- e. palace intrigues 2:21-23, 7:9f.

Con

1. No historical record discloses that Xerxes ever had a queen by the name of Esther or one who was a Jewess.

2. Exaggeration, characteristic of imaginative fiction, is much in evidence throughout the narrative:

- a. 83-foot high gallows 5:14
- b. 6-month's feast 1:4
- c. year's beauty treatment for court maidens 2:12
- d. 10,000 talent (\$18,000,000) gift for financing death of Jews 3:9

No Religion or Morals

The religion of the prophets was far from dominating Judaism of the second century B.C. This Book is out of sympathy with what the prophets taught. It bristles with hatred and revenge. The unnamed author was more patriotic than religious. Fasting is mentioned, but no prayer. God's help and leadership, so prominent in the best of earlier Jewish thought, are referred to only in veiled language as if the author were unwilling to speak of God's providence.

The Jews are not distinguished from the heathen by their religion—only by their peculiar laws (3:8) which they readily disregarded to serve their purpose (2:9). The Book's characters, famous as they are, portray no religious aspirations or convictions.

Esther explains why the lofty spiritual and ethical teachings of Jesus encountered such bitter opposition in Jewish circles.

In this Book there is no actual preparation for the Gospel. Rather, it indicates a great need for the Gospel.

Read It Yourself

Now that you have a background of the Book of Esther you will want to read it for yourself. Perhaps you will want to use one of these three methods.

1. Read the story in one sitting, as you might any story you read. Remember to look for the points brought out in the topic. Consider the story. Re-read it for more information. Jot down the things you have learned from it.

2. Meet with several of your friends for a Bible study on the Book. Use the divisions on the chart. Share ideas and keep notes.

3. Read the Book for your private devotions. Using the divisions of the chart, it will take five nights.

| Vashti Deposed | Esther Made Queen | Haman and Plot Against Jews | Esther's Intercession | Jews Vindicated |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3:1—4:3 | 4:4—8:17 | 9:1—10:3 |

Seeing

The Story of Jesus

a puppet play

Presentation Pointers

The following play is taken from a revised script of a puppet play, originally written and produced by the intermediate Luther League of First Lutheran Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The play was presented on Palm Sunday, 1956.

Adapt the script to your own uses. Mike and Carol are played by an intermediate boy and girl. They stand in front of the puppet stage and make exits by moving around to the back of the stage. All other characters are puppets.

Consult a puppet book in your local library for instructions on making the puppets. They may be hand puppets, or the more difficult marionettes.

At the end of the play, close your meeting with a brief prayer of thanks.

PROLOGUE

CAROL: Hi Mike. Wasn't league terrific tonight!

MIKE: Yeah! That was an interesting topic about the Easter story.

CAROL: Yes, all about the last days of Jesus. It seemed almost real.

MIKE: Sometimes I wish that it might be real—you know what I mean? It's hard to imagine what it was like seeing Jesus in real life. I suppose if I had just one wish I'd wish that I could *see* the story of Jesus, just like the people did then.

MARY: I heard that wish.

MIKE: Did you say that, Carol?

MARY: No, I did. Look over here. Hello. Come on over. Don't be afraid.

(Carol and Mike walk to puppet stage)

MARY: I'm Mary Magdalene.

MIKE: I suppose we'd better say hello.

CAROL: Hello! I'm Carol and this is my friend Mike.

MARY: I know who you are. I heard you wish to see the story of Jesus. I know Jesus well, and if you want to come with me to Jerusalem . . .

MIKE: You mean you can show us Jesus?



making puppets is fun too!

MARY: Sure! You're just in time to see him now. A big crowd is forming because they heard he was going to pass by this way.

SCENE 1

MIKE: There are a lot of people. Are all of them here to see Jesus?

MARY: Not exactly. You see, the Feast of Passover is to be celebrated in a day or two, and people are coming from all over the country to the Temple here in Jerusalem to celebrate. Jesus is coming, too, and the people are gathering to welcome Him.

CAROL: But what is the Feast of the Passover?

MARY: It is a festival started a long time ago by the ancient Jews to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt in the days of Moses. The Feast of the Passover has been celebrated ever since.

FIRST PERSON: Jesus is coming. He is going to teach in the Temple.

SECOND PERSON: Most of the people of Jerusalem are anxious to see Him for they have heard of Him. He performs miracles. They love him for His kindness and sympathy. Our friend, Lazarus, who was dead three days came to life when Jesus prayed for Him.

THIRD PERSON: What does this Jesus of Nazareth look like? Is He really the Son of God?

FIRST PERSON: My brother saw Him once. He said He had the kindest face! He must be the Son of God for He healed the blind and deaf, made the lame walk, and cast out devils—all in God's name.

SECOND PERSON: It's remarkable, isn't it? We Jews have expected a Messiah for so long, and to think He finally has come in our lifetime!

THIRD PERSON: But I heard a rumor that the Scribes and Pharises are plotting against Him. They say He is changing the Hebrew tradition and enticing the people to follow the wrong way of life.

SECOND PERSON: They are just jealous!

(A shout goes up from the crowd.)

ALL: He is coming! I see Him now!

MIKE: Look, There is Jesus. He looks just like pictures I've seen of Him.

CAROL: Yes, He's riding on a donkey. And his disciples are following Him. He looks very humble.

MIKE: Look at the joyous people spreading palm branches in His path. What a welcome!

CAROL: Listen to the shouts going up from the crowd.

CROWD: Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in the Highest.

SCENE 2

CAROL: It's such a quiet night—and so dark. I'm afraid something is going to happen.

(Lights on puppet stage go on)

MIKE: Look. Someone is praying. Could it be? Yes, it is Jesus.

CAROL: Jesus seems greatly troubled.

MIKE: There are His disciples, over there sleeping by the gate, while their Master is praying.

CAROL: Maybe if we're quiet we can hear what He's saying. He's praying so long. Let's listen.

JESUS: *(faintly in background)* Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt, be done. Amen

MIKE: He is through praying. He's rising and returning to His disciples.

CAROL: Yes, and they've gotten up. Wait a minute. Do you hear something? It sounds like . . . a crowd, I think.

MIKE: Yes, and it's getting louder. You can see their lanterns. Look Judas is leading them.

(Judas comes on)

JUDAS: Master! Master! *(He kisses Jesus)*

JESUS: Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

(Crowd throngs around Jesus and His disciples)

CAPTAIN: You are Jesus of Nazareth?

JESUS: I am. Who are you?

CAPTAIN: I am Captain of the Guard. I have come to arrest you under the name of Caesar, the Emperor.

JOHN: Arrest Jesus? But He has done nothing wrong. We are His disciples and we can tell you of Him.

CAPTAIN: I must do my duty. Tie his hands.

PETER: Don't you dare lay a hand on him. I'll strike you with my sword.

(Soldiers attempt to bind Jesus)

JESUS: Don't, Peter. Let them be.

(The crowd goes off with Jesus and His disciples, their lanterns and voices fading in the distance)

MIKE: I wonder what will happen to Jesus?

CAROL: I don't know. But it all seems so quiet and empty now that He's gone.

SCENE 3

CAROL: Wasn't Pilate perfectly horrible when he let Jesus be crucified just to save his own neck?

MIKE: Yes, and that trial was unbearable. When they beat him on the back, he could almost feel the sting myself.

CAROL: The people certainly changed. His was such a triumphal entry when He came into Jerusalem. But the people were so thankless and . . .

MIKE: I know just how you feel. But where is He now?

SOLDIER: You're looking for Jesus who claims He is the Son of God? (*scornfully*) Ha! There He is! Up on the center cross between two thieves, right where He belongs.

FIRST PERSON: They don't know that He is the Saviour. They think He will take away the power of the Scribes and Pharisees so they want Him killed.

SOLDIER: He's getting what He deserves!

JESUS: Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

THIRD PERSON: If He is the Son of God, let Him come down from the cross.

THIEF: Jesus, remember me when you go into heaven.

JESUS: Today you will be in Paradise with me.

(Storm and lightning)

JESUS: Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

CAROL: Look—look! What's happening?

MIKE: All of a sudden there came such a storm. What happened?

THIRD PERSON: Maybe *this* Jesus was the Messiah after all.

SOLDIER: Truly, this was the Son of God.

SCENE 4

CAROL: Look over there. Aren't those two of Jesus' disciples?

MIKE: Yes. It's John and Peter.

CAROL: Let's ask them what will happen to them and what they'll do now that Jesus is dead.

MIKE: John, what are you and the rest of the disciples going to do now?

JOHN: We are very discouraged and afraid. If they killed Jesus, they will kill us too. We have considered going back to our regular occupations.

CAROL: Look, over there. Isn't that Mary Magdalene?

(Disciples rush over to Mary)

PETER: Mary, Mary! Why are you so joyful?

MARY: Peter, oh Peter. What He said has been fulfilled. He has truly risen on the third day.

JOHN: This is no time for jokes, Mary.

MARY: It is no joke. We went to His tomb early this morning to anoint His body. But the large stone was rolled away. We went inside and an angel told us that He had risen. The other women left, but I stayed to pray. I heard someone call my name. I answered and looked up, and Jesus Himself was standing there.

JOHN: Are you sure, Mary? It has been prophesied and He has told us. Take us there and let us see with our own eyes the stone rolled away.

MIKE: But there is no need to! There Jesus stands, as alive and wonderful as ever!

(Disciples kneel before Jesus)

JOHN: Master! It is true!

PETER: Oh Lord! Thou art risen.

CAROL: Oh Mike, let's kneel with them and worship all together.

(Carol and Mike kneel and bow their heads)

JESUS: I am the resurrection and the life. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.

(Music crescendo as Jesus says this. Then lights go off on puppet stage.)

Power Word:

ATONEMENT

Presentation Pointers

LLA ought to give a special medal to anyone who can make an adequate, interesting presentation of the Christian atonement. It's tuff!

In addition to being pure theology, and therefore dry to some, it's a dangerous topic to present. You can make it so complicated that everyone misses the point. Or you can make it so simple that it fails to make any impression.

In addition to reviewing the material in the topic, stage a mock debate where several individuals represent all or some of the various approaches to the cross. Each one will explain how his theory works, claim that it is the best explanation, and point out the weaknesses of the others.

For example, the ransom theory expresses well the love of God, but implies that the devil is almost equal with God in power and must be "bought off." The sacrifice theory expresses well the actual suffering Christ went through, but makes God blood-thirsty. The satisfaction theory expresses well what man does to God through sin, but makes God too legalistic. The moral influence theory states well how we should react to the cross, but makes you feel the cross is merely a device God used. The champion theory rightly emphasizes the victory Christ won for us, but under-emphasizes our own sin. The mystical union theory answers how God, with justice, could punish His Son for us, but it's so mystical.

What a pow-wow of a time you'd have if a debate like this could be arranged! Of course, long before mother and dad wondered where you were all night, each theorist ought to agree that the big thing about the cross is the love of God which permitted Christ to die in the first place, thus assuring our At-One-Ment with Him.

by Paul J. Kid

HAVE you ever seen two friends squabble? A good old fashioned free-for-all? Sure you have. And it's a real relief when the squabble is ended and the two are good friends again. Especially if you've been one of the squabblers!

From this squabble you can gain some idea of the Christian meaning of atonement . . . (p.s. A very limited idea).

On the surface of things, atonement means just what it looks like it means when you take the syllables apart. Go ahead! Take them apart! You get *At-One-Ment*.

When two persons, who have been

adds with each other, finally get together . . . that is, when they become *at-one* again . . . there you have an *atonement*. Of course before any such reconciliation can really happen, each person must have the sincerest of intentions to shoulder the penalty for his share in the trouble and to *make good* on whatever damage he has done.

The Squabble Between Man and God

For the Christian, atonement is the process whereby God and man become *at-one*. They, too have had a sort of squabble, and need reconciliation.

Maybe, in speaking of God and man, we shouldn't use that word *squabble*. *Injustice* would be a better one. *Squabble* suggests that both God and man are responsible when relations between them become damaged. But unlike an ordinary squabble between two men, where the guilt can usually be divided between them, this is a one-sided affair. Man is the transgressor. *He's the only transgressor!*

There's something right in the nature of man that is sinful. Just take a look at little children at play. You are exceedingly blind if you fail to notice the threads of jealousy and selfishness and self-centeredness that run through even their young hearts. The word sin fits all men of all time.

God, on the other hand, is morally perfect. And inasmuch as he is also a God of absolute justice, by his own nature he cannot overlook the sinful natures of men. A rift, a wall of sin, divides man and God.

Man's Predicament

That makes it rather important, that something be done about these damaged relations and that man and God be *at-one* again.

But how?

Real atonement implies that the guilty person will take the full punishment for his sins and repair all damages. And man is capable of neither! What punishment, equal to our sins, are we able to bear, short of death itself. How can we possibly suffer enough, and compensate God enough, for just the one sin of crucifying

his Son . . . which is what we all do whenever we sin?

Man's predicament is a real one. He is deep in a hole of sin. God, being the just Person he is, can't possibly look the other way. And man is totally incapable of squaring himself with God.

The Atonement of Christ

As much as God is a God of absolute justice, he is also a God of absolute love. So great is his love that his desire for an *At-One-Ment* with man is even greater than our own. And he did something about it!

Into the world he sent his Son to pay the penalty of sin for us. The *goodness* which Christ accomplished in his earthly ministry was enough . . . more than enough . . . to "make up" for our sins. At the same time, the *suffering* he endured was enough to satisfy the demand of justice that sin be met with punishment. The *total* result of the life, suffering, and death of Jesus was a real *At-One-Ment* between God and man.

The main thing to remember is this. God's demand for absolute justice would never have been satisfied if, out of his sense of absolute love, he had not sent his Son into the world to atone for us. From an objective point of view, the cross is a fulfilling of justice. But from the personal viewpoint of the Christian, it is even more a demonstration of God's infinite love for man!

Approaches to the Cross

No appreciation of the Christian atonement is complete without a keen appreciation of the cross of Jesus. For it was on the cross that both the goodness and the suffering of Jesus were culminated.

At different times in Christian history, there have been different explanations as to exactly how the cross of Jesus did make God and man *at-one* again. Here are several of them!

1. *The Ransom Theory* held by Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, Augustine. These men taught that all men live in slavery to the devil. The devil has literally *kidnapped* us from God. The death of Jesus was the price God paid to buy

us back. See hymn 68, stanza 5, in *The Common Service Book*.

2. *The Sacrifice Theory*. In Old Testament days, God commanded that blood sacrifices be made to him to atone for men's sins. This commandment was never completely carried out until the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, was offered on the cross. See CSB hymn 60, stanza 2.

3. *The Satisfaction Theory* held by Anselm. This theory was popular in the early days of feudalism. God was conceived as a feudal lord whose honor had been injured by the transgressions of men. Christ's death *satisfied* the honor of God and reinstated man in his kingdom. See CSB hymn 138, stanza 4.

4. *The Moral Influence Theory* held by Abelard. According to this view, atonement takes place not on the cross but in the believer's heart. The main purpose the cross serves is to inspire the individual person, by the suffering of Christ, so that he will repent of his sins and accept the forgiveness of God. See CSB hymn 97, stanza 4.

5. *The Champion Theory*. Read Colossians 2:15. Here Christ becomes a gladiator. He is the champion of men who wins the struggle of good vs. evil, life vs. death. See CSB hymn 195, stanza 2.

6. *The Mystical Union Theory*. Read

Galatians 2:20. This theory emphasizes no atonement is real until the guilty person himself suffers for his sins. There is, however, a mystical union between Jesus and those who believe in him. Therefore, when Christ was crucified, we suffered and died with him. See CSB hymn 374, stanza 2.

In all of these approaches to the cross, there is something of the whole truth of the Christian atonement. The weakness in some of them will not mislead us, provided we always come back to the place where we see the cross as a demonstration of the utter, fantastic lengths to which God, of his love, will go that heaven and man may be *at-one*.

Knee Pants Theology

When the author still wore knee pants, he broke a neighbor's window. The neighbor was severely annoyed and demanded restoration. But a six-year-old has neither the funds, nor the ability, to replace a window. All he could do was to go to his dad, confess his misdeed, and ask him to fix things up again. This his dad did.

So it is with the Christian atonement. It is God, through Christ, who takes the full brunt of disgrace and punishment for our sin.



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1957

May we suggest that you type these topics on a filing card and keep your own filing-index of topical material. A complete index will appear in a later 1958 issue of HIGH IDEALS.

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Echoes

Pen pals are becoming more and more popular. (See page 24.) Here are more addresses for you. Let's get those letters in the mail.

DIANE BIRD. (14) 180 State St., Johnstown, Pa. Swimming, dancing, horseback riding, cooking, sports. First Lutheran Church.

BERNICE BLOCK. (15) 399 Dufferin Ave., Winnipeg 4, Manitoba, Canada. Sports, singing, swimming, animals, Luther League. Wants to hear from boys and girls from all parts of the world. Trinity Lutheran.

FRED COLEMAN. (14) 2227 Sunshine Ave., Johnstown, Pa. Archery, swimming, hunting, football, Scouts. First Lutheran.

SANDRA HILL. (14) 104 Dahlia St., Johnstown, Pa. Swimming, dancing, sewing, collecting top tune records. First Lutheran.

NANCY HITE. (14) 420 Tunnel Ave., Johnstown, Pa. Ice skating, dancing, swimming, music. First Lutheran.

BETTY HORNER. (14) 401 Linden Ave., Johnstown, Pa. Dancing, swimming. First Lutheran.

SUSAN JAMES. (12) 235 Mabel St., Johnstown, Pa. Horses, dancing, swimming, sewing. First Lutheran.

THERESA LYERLY. (15) Rt. 2, China Grove, N. C. Dancing, collecting records, roller skating, listening to the radio. Ebenezer Lutheran.

NANCY MUTTER. (13) 206 Arch St., Johnstown, Pa. Swimming, dancing, sports. First Lutheran.

BARBARA NESBITT. (12) 332 Columbia St., Johnstown, Pa. Cooking, swimming, sewing, sports. First Lutheran.

JUDY PYLE. (14) 2-A Oakhurst Homes, Johnstown, Pa. Sports, oil painting. First Lutheran.

CARL REPLOGLE. (14) 200 Hystone Ave., Johnstown, Pa. Swimming, archery, football, baseball, Scouts. First Lutheran.

TERRY SCHEFFHAUER. (14) P.O. Box 247, Johnstown, Pa. Baseball, basketball, hockey, Scouts. First Lutheran.

PAM SIEVERS. (14) 609 Ash St., Johnstown, Pa. Dancing, sports, collecting Elvis Presley, Rickey Nelson, and Sal Mineo's pictures. First Lutheran.

KAY STIREWALT. (15) Rt. 2, China Grove, N. C. Dancing, music, art, records, skating. Ebenezer Lutheran.

ANN WOLF. (14) 149 Clarion St., Johnstown, Pa. Swimming, dancing, cooking, collecting top tunes. First Lutheran.

Let's have more addresses. How about some intermediate boys?!

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Coming attractions

Liberia and Tanganyika

Spanish Publications

Acts of Apostles

Holy Spirit

Bible Study

Diaconate

Camping

Family

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Dr. Charles B. Foelsch
2750 Marin Ave.
Berkeley 8, Calif.